

Suggested Remarks
Jon D. Lindborg, USAID Mission Director
"Global Forum on Liberty and Prosperity"
Rizal Ballroom, Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City
October 20, 2006, 12:00 p.m.

Honorable Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban;
Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the
Philippines;
Esteemed colleagues from the Diplomatic Corps;
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good afternoon.

It is an honor to join you today at this Global Forum on Liberty and Prosperity, which brings together 350 distinguished delegates including chief justices from 35 countries, representatives from the executive and legislative branches of government, international development organizations, academia, bar associations, the business sector, and civil society.

Let me also convey the warm greetings of the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines, Kristie Kenney, who was unable to attend today's event. She has had a very busy week, including a trip, yesterday, to Bicol where she was able to visit communities that were affected by typhoon Millenyo.

THE U.S.-PHILIPPINES RELATIONSHIP

Your Excellencies and Distinguished Colleagues, the Philippines has long been a friend and close strategic ally of the United States. U.S.-Philippine relations are based on our shared history, our commitment to freedom and our democratic principles, as well as our economic ties. At the most fundamental level of bilateral relations, human relationships continue to form a strong bridge between our two countries. There are an estimated two million Americans of Philippine ancestry in the United States and more than 130,000 American citizens live in the Philippines. So our two peoples are linked closely in our shared values

of liberty and prosperity, the theme of this global forum.

And yet, too often, we take these two powerful words, liberty and prosperity, for granted. So allow me talk briefly about them, borrowing substantially from how they are laid out in the United States National Security Strategy.

LIBERTY

Many of us may be somewhat complacent in thinking the case has been made that a society with liberty is a stable society, that liberty is a birthright of all people. Yet history teaches that liberty must make its case, again and again, from one generation to the next. The work of liberty is never done.

The United States has long championed liberty because we believe the desire for freedom lives in every human heart and the imperative of human dignity transcends all nations and cultures. Governments that honor their

citizens' dignity and desire for liberty tend to uphold responsible conduct toward other nations, while governments that oppress their people also threaten the peace and stability of other nations. Because democracies are the most responsible members of the international system, the United States Government believes that promoting liberty and democracy - while recognizing the many challenges therein - is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability and extending peace and prosperity.

PROSPERITY

Likewise the quest for prosperity, economic freedom and a more equal distribution of the benefits of economic growth goes on. Economic freedom is linked inseparably to political liberty. Economic freedom empowers individuals, and empowered individuals increasingly demand greater political freedom. Greater economic freedom also leads to greater economic opportunity and prosperity for everyone.

History has judged the market economy as the single most effective economic system and the greatest antidote to poverty.

To expand economic liberty and prosperity, the United States promotes free and fair trade, open markets, a stable financial system, the integration of the global economy, and secure, clean energy development.

Helping the world's poor is a strategic priority for the United States and a moral imperative. The U.S. Government has made - and is keeping - that commitment. In fact, the total official development assistance (ODA) provided by the United States for 2005 came to \$27.5 billion - a near tripling of ODA since 2001. But these vastly increased resources have also come with new responsibilities - to focus on performance, results, accountability, anti-corruption - and ultimately, to define success as the ability of a nation to graduate from aid and become a full partner in peace, liberty and prosperity.

THE U.S.-PHILIPPINES DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

The United States is working in close partnership with the Philippines to promote our shared goals of prosperity, peace and security, and good governance. Through a range of diplomatic, development, trade, and defense cooperation efforts, we are committed to supporting liberty and prosperity in the Philippines. Our USAID programs, averaging around \$80 million in grant resources per year, support efforts to promote economic growth and alleviate poverty, with a focus on building a more peaceful and secure Mindanao.

Meanwhile, important USAID programs continue in governance, electoral reform, health, basic education, environmental protection and rural electrification. In addition, this year, the U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation granted \$21 million to the Philippines for a program focused on anti-corruption and improved revenue administration,

which we are now beginning to implement with our GRP partners.

U.S.G. SUPPORT FOR PHILIPPINES' JUDICIAL REFORM

In close cooperation with our other international donor partners, many of you who are here today, we are proud of our productive partnership with the Supreme Court.

Within this context, the United States has been pleased to play a role in helping support Philippines' efforts to reform the judiciary and strengthen the rule of law. Major USAID partners in these efforts include The Asia Foundation, which is co-sponsoring today's luncheon, along with the American Bar Association (ABA) and the Rule of Law and Effectiveness (ROLE) Project. Strengthening the rule of law is important to the United States for several reasons:

First, we believe that the transparent application and enforcement of a consistent rule of law is one of the most fundamental

underpinnings of a democracy. Yet the practice of law enforcement must always be balanced with the safeguarding of fundamental liberties and respect for constitutional and human rights.

Second, the effectiveness of the judicial system is a key factor in determining the climate for doing business and promoting investment. And, of course, increased investment is fundamental to achieving prosperity. It has been said that, "Capital is a coward." Investors, whether foreign or domestic, want to know that contracts will be enforced, that they will be treated fairly and based on the rule of law, and that there is predictability in the judicial system. In those countries where these conditions are lacking, investment - and the level of prosperity - tend to suffer.

Third, an effective judicial system is central to global efforts to combat transnational crime and terrorism. Accordingly, the United States strongly supports efforts in the Philippines to

fight organized crime, money laundering, drug trafficking, trafficking of women and children, transnational crimes and terrorism.

IN CLOSING

Despite impressive achievements in judicial reform in the Philippines, we are heartened that Chief Justice Panganiban continues to spearhead an ambitious reform agenda. For example, he has underscored the "**-ins**": the importance of **integrity**, **independence**, **industry**, and **intelligence**; and the need for the judiciary to be morally courageous in standing its ground against the onslaught of **influence**, **interference**, and **indifference**.

Or take a moment to look at the web site for the Supreme Court of the Philippines and then look at the web site for the U.S. Supreme Court... where there might even be some possibility in getting some Filipino help in improving *our* own Supreme Court's web site!

With a judicial reform framework well in place and visionary leadership by the Supreme Court, we are optimistic that the Philippines can continue on the path of improved rule of law and increased prosperity. The U.S. Government, along with our other development partners, remains strongly committed to supporting the Philippines judiciary in its efforts to implement judicial reforms and strengthen the rule of law.

May all of you here today thrive in contending with the challenges before you, prime among them, preserving the rule of law. Conferences like this enable people who subscribe to the fundamental principles of liberty, equality, and justice for all to join hands with others who hold to those principles. The U.S. Government and the American people wish you well as you work in various ways to promote liberty and prosperity in your local communities, your countries, and our world.

Congratulations to all those who made this
Global Forum on Liberty and Prosperity
possible.

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat at Mabuhay!